

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01

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FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9371

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 3914

E.O.: 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, UN, BG, IN

SUBJ: BANGLADESH APPROACH ON FARAKKA BARRAGE

REFS: USUN 3652, USUN 3850

1. REAR ADMIRAL KHAN, DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR FOR MARTIAL LAW, AND CHIEF OF THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION TO THE 31ST UNGA CALLED AT HIS OWN REQUEST UPON GOVERNOR SCRANTON ON SEPT. 21. HE WAS ACCOMPAINED BY THE BANGLADESH PERM REP KHWAJA MOHAMMED KAISER.

2. THE ADMIRAL PRESENTED THE BANGLADESH POSITION IN ITS DISPUTE WITH INDIA ON THE FARAKKA BARRAGE QUESTION AND SOLICITED U.S. SUPPORT. HE STRESSED THAT BANGLADESH IS LOOKING FOR AN AMICABLE SOLUTION AND NOTED THAT "GOOD OFFICES OF FRIENDS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN RESOLUTIONS". AMBASSADOR KAISER REMARKED THAT BANGLADESH PREFERS BEHIND-THE-SCENES PRESSURE TO SOLVE THE ISSUE IN LIEU OF CON-
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FRONTATION. BOTH MEN NOTED THAT ALL BANGLADESH WANTS IS

WATER AND THAT BANGLADESH IS OPEN TO DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIA AS TO HOW THE WATER IS TO BE OBTAINED.

3. THE ADMIRAL SAID BANGALDESH DID NOT INTEND TO RETURN TO BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH INDIA. BOTH HE AND KAISER INDICATED THAT THE BENGALI ARE STILL SIMMERING OVER INDIAN REMARKS AND BEHAVIOR REGARDED AS DISCOURTEOUS AT THE RECENTLY COLLAPSED NEW DELHI TALKS. KHAN IMPLIED HE WAS PERSONALLY OFFENDED BY PRIME MINISTER GANDHI'S CURT REMARKS IN A BRIEF FIVE-MINUTE INTERVIEW.

4. GOVERNOR SCRANTON SUGGESTED THAT THE GANGES WATER DISPUTE IS A COMPLICATED LEGAL PROBLEM. KHAN ADMITTED THAT BANGLADESH HAS NOT EXAMINED THE LEGAL ASPECT IN DEPTH. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THERE ARE MANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS CONCERNED WITH WATER DISTRIBUTION, POPULATION, AND DAM FEASIBILITY IN THE GANGES RIVER AREA. BANGLADESH FEELS THAT IT MUST GET A SOLUTON TO THE CURRENT GANGES WATER ISSUE BECAUSE IT SEES FUTURE DIFFICULTIES OVER OTHER RIVERS INVOLVING COMMON INDIAN-BANGLADESH INTERESTS. THE BRAHMAPUTRA WAS MENTIONED AS AN EXAMPLE. WITHOUT FURTHER EXPLANATION, THE ADMIRAL COMMENTED THAT BANGLADESH NEEDS A SOLUTION TO THE FARAKKA BARRAGE ISSUE BY THIS NOVEMBER.

5. ADMIRAL KHAN SAID HE HAD CALLED UPON AMBASSADOR JAMES MURRAY, BRITISH DEPUTY PER MREP TO THE UN, ON THE PREVIOUS DAY TO SOLICIT SUPPORT. THE ADMIRAL HAS ARRANGED ALSO TO SEE THE IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO PURSUE HIS QUEST OF SUPPORT.

6. GOVERNOR SCRANTON REVIEWED THE U.S. POSITION ON THE FARAKKA BARRAGE ISSUE ALREADY PRESENTED TO THE BANGLADESH AUTHORITIES. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS THE UK MAY HAVE MORE INFLUCNCE ON THE INDIAN AUTHORITIES THAN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES AND HOPED THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO EXERCISE A MEDIATING INFLUENCE NOW.
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